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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by Rev. Don Davidson of First Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Shall we pray.

Dear God, our Heavenly Father, creator of this vast universe and lover of all mankind, we begin our day with the recognition that You are sovereign Lord and that we are accountable to You above all other allegiances.

Thank You for this rich and diverse country, the United States of America, and for this great deliberative body and the role each Member plays in leading our Nation. Grant that these Members of the Senate will have wisdom as they wrestle with issues large and larger. Show them what is right, and may they find the courage to act according to their convictions and not the whims of ever-changing culture.

As the prophet Jeremiah said: When they stand at the crossroads and look, may they ask for the ancient paths and where the good way is and walk in it. Then our Nation can have rest for her soul.

We ask You to pour out Your blessings on America. But we are weak, Lord, prone to wander, and we feel it; prone to leave the God we love. Yet You are gracious, compassionate, full of mercy, and eager to forgive. We turn to You for grace and hope and health.

May this be a day when all of us, inside and outside this Chamber, wherever we be, seek the fulfillment of Jesus's words: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven."

I pray this in His precious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 24, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to be in a period for the transaction of morning business this morning for 1 hour. The majority will control the first 30 minutes and the Republicans will control the final 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1315, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act. There will be up to 60 minutes for debate on the Burr amendment prior to a vote in relation to the

amendment, to be followed by a vote on passage of the bill.

Upon disposition of the veterans bill, the Senate will consider H.R. 493, the Genetic Nondiscrimination Act. The only amendment in order to the bill is a Snowe-Kennedy-Enzi substitute. There will be up to 2 hours for debate on the substitute and on the bill prior to a vote on passage of this legislation. We expect the first vote to occur around noon today, Mr. President.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half. The Senator from Washington.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are now 5½ years into the war in Iraq. We have been at war longer now than we fought in World War II, and we are creating hundreds of new veterans each and every year. Yet, too often, what we have seen is that this administration has failed to acknowledge the price our veterans and their families are paying in service. From the shameful conditions at Walter Reed Hospital a year ago, and VA facilities across the country, to a lack of mental health counselors, to a benefit claims backlog of months and sometimes years for our

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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